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THE RAGTIMER

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PUBLISHED BY
THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE
PRESERVATION OF
CLASSICAL RAGTIME

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THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
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is a non - profit corporation having the following objects:

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

DON'T
let the hot daze of
summer
spoil your thirst for
RAGTIME
the fall is coming!
Toronto offers
THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
12th Annual BASH
on the weekend of
Sat., Oct. 23, 1976

(Details in next issue)

RAGTIME...

UNDER YOUR HAT

The members of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY have witnessed a tremendous revival of interest in ragtime music. When the SOCIETY was formed in 1962, only 14 years ago, ragtime was a largely forgotten and almost non-existent music as far as the public was concerned. Ragtime recordings were few in number and hard to find.

Old original ragtime sheet music was not then as closely held or appreciated as it is today. Nevertheless it was difficult to locate. For the most part any worthwhile surviving original copies have already been quietly picked up by music collectors, dealers, music libraries and museums over the ensuing years.

Currently, the important music of the classic ragtime era is readily available in reprinted or reissued form. There are individual compositions and those forming part of an extensive selection of music folios. Original ragtime piano rolls have been reissued. There are countless long play records available covering reissue collections from old original cylinders and early discs. There are numerous long play records covering recordings made in the last 15 years including classic ragtime as it was and a wealth of contemporary ragtime by present-day composers. An impressive range of ragtime has found its way on to tape. Ragtime can never go underground again. Popular demand of recent years has created a mountain of material that will be widely preserved for many years to come.

Our members are likely to be selective and

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discriminating in limiting their choice of ragtime material. If that has been so, then now is the time to re-examine your holding with a view to filling any gaps before the present heated-up wave of commercial publishing and record pressing reaches an end. This is not with the thought of any end to ragtime, but there will be times in future years when ragtime is not as readily available through commercial outlets as it is today. Hence this "Think Ahead" but unoriginal proposition is passed along as a timely notion.

Incidentally, if you caught the May TV special of MERV. GRIFFIN covering a salute to IRVING BERLIN for his 88th Birthday, you must have enjoyed the talk show remarks and appearances of ETHEL MERMAN singing, and EUBIE BLAKE playing memorable Berlin songs.

The next issue of THE RAGTIMER will include the necessary registration particulars for THE RAGTIME SOCIETY 1976 ANNUAL BASH at Toronto on the weekend of October 23rd.

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SEDALIA RAGTIME FESTIVAL 1976

The third annual festival at Sedalia, Missouri is planned for July 30 to August 1. For complete information write to The Sedalia Ragtime Festival, Box 967, Sedalia, Missouri, U. S. A. The impressive star-studded guest list promises plenty of fine ragtime.

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BICENTENNIAL RAGTIME FESTIVAL CARTHAGE, MISSOURI

This festival was scheduled for May 29, 30, 31, 1976. Carthaginians James S. Scott and Clarence Woods, two famous ragtime composers were to be specifically honoured. Expected guest performers included Bob Darch, Ray Rose, Peter Lundberg (Sweden), Steve Spracklen and his sister, Susan Spracklen. The information arrived too late for advance notice to members. Perhaps a report of the event may reach us at a later date. For the record, Officials Mrs. Ruby Wilson and Mr. Robert S. Dale supplied the Festival address as P. O. Box 595, Carthage, Missouri 64.

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C. B. C. BEGINS PREPARATIONS FOR RAGTIME T. V. DOCUMENTARY

A Canadian Broadcasting Corp. crew has been travelling through the U. S. filming for a special on contemporary American Ragtime. Personalities already recorded include Eubie Blake, Lou Busch, Dick Zimmerman, Ian Whitcomb and Bill Coffman. We shall be watching for the final product with interest.

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RECORD REVIEW

by
TEX
WYNDHAM

GNP Crescendo GNPS-9032 'The Genius Of Scott Joplin', piano solos by Ann Charters.

Selections: Stoptime Rag, Nonpareil, Binks' Waltz, A Breeze From Alabama, Great Crush Collision, Prelude To Act III from 'Treemonisha', Something Doing, Reflection Rag, Two Songs (I Am Thinking Of My Pickaninny Days and Little Black Baby), The Favourite.

When Ms. Charters' initial Lps of ragtime piano solos appeared several years ago, they contained honest and sympathetic readings of classic rags that many of us had never heard, and whatever their weaknesses, we were only too happy to acclaim their appearance. She still plays cleanly and with a light pulse, but these bland, manner-of-fact readings, comprising her first album since 1964, lack much of the warmth and engaging nature of Joplin's music - and those qualities can be found fairly easily on record these days. Moreover, some of the selections offer very little to the listener other than relative rarity on disc; the two songs are turn-of-the-century sentiment at its most maudlin, virtually untouched by any flashes of Joplin's unique abilities, while the piano solo version of the rambling, only-occasionally-syncopated "Prelude" is diffuse and soporific. "Nonpareil" and "Favourite" are brisk, forthright renditions that come off rather well, but Ms. Charters' decision to omit the foot-tapping on "Stoptime", rending its fabric and leaving only a work punctuated by awkward pauses, provides the clue that in this album, we have dignity at all costs including that of boring the audience.

* * *

Angel S-37113 'The Easy Winners', duets by Itzhak Perlman, violin, and André Previn, piano.

Selections: The Easy Winners, The Rag-Time Dance, Bethena, Magnetic Rag, The Strenuous Life, Elite Syncopations, The Entertainer, Solace, Pine Apple Rag, Sugar Cane.

At its best ("Easy Winners", "Rag-Time Dance"), this Lp contains a distinctive sound, impeccable technique, and a spirit of abandon and hilarity that bursts out of the grooves. At its worst (the drawn-out "Bethena" at 6-1/2 minutes and "Solace" at over 7), we get an overwrought, weepy violin number that conjures up images of ragtime-era cafes with lots of potted palms, or hand-wringing silent movie death scenes. In between, Previn plays with a light, urging rhythm and inserts imaginative counter-melodies behind Perlman's full-bodied, straight-ahead lead, resulting in jaunty, personal,

spontaneous renditions that were obviously great fun for the participants - and are almost as much for the listeners. Excellent sound quality, and with many more pluses than minuses ("Magnetic" is an outgoing performance with a kaleidoscope of effects that you wouldn't have expected from only two instruments, "Pine Apple" moves from eccentric second-strain rhythm to legato trio into a swinging ride-out), it's a novel and enjoyable album, though perhaps not for the purists (Joplin's routines are followed, but liberties are sometimes taken with melody or placement of rhythmic accents). B-plus.

* * *

Kicking Mule KM 107 'Contemporary Ragtime Guitar', acoustic guitar solos.

Selections and Artists: Piano Roll Blues, Living In The Country, Oh Papa Blues, Slippery Elm, Dill Pickle Rag - Rick Schoenberg; Wild Cherries Rag, Grandpa's Spells, Nola - Dave Laibman; Black Berry Rag, Somebody Loves Me, Bye Bye Blackbird - Dale Miller Jr. ; Grace And Beauty Rag, Georgia Camp Meeting - Leo Wynkamp; Maple Leaf Rag - Tony Marcus; Buck Dancer's Choice - Larry Sandberg; Tenth Street Scratch - Woody Mann; Original Rags - Tom Gilfellon.

Available from Kicking Mule Records, Box 3233, Berkeley, California 94703.

Well-played ragtime on the guitar (the Laibman solos, "Dill Pickles", "Georgia Camp Meeting"), is surprisingly faithful to the printed scores, the artist somehow getting the melody, counter-melodies and stride figures all into the comparatively confined range of six strings plucked with five fingers. Even the weaker numbers generate a pleasant atmosphere, but if the rhythm fails to bite, they can also get colorless and insipid pretty fast. Moreover, I am somewhat frustrated at the frequent omission of one or more strains of most of the classic rags on the program, making for short tracks that only get partially into the tunes and leave me waiting for the other shoe to drop, so to speak. Admitting that there isn't much competition in the ragtime guitar Lp market, I still find this one, which has a high proportion of selections that (however suitably rendered) aren't really rags in the sense that Society members use the term, no more than marginal.

* * *

Yazoo L-1048 "Banjo Crackerjax 1922-1930", banjo solos by Harry Reser with rhythm accompaniment.

Selections: Lolly-Pops, Frosted Chocolate, Heebie Jeebies, Send Back My Honeyman, The Cat And The Dog, Crazy Jo', Flapperette, Cracker Jack, Kitten On The Keys, Easy Goin', Sugar Blues, The Old Town Pump, Pickin's, Fair And Warmer.

Collected by ragtime authority David A. Jasen, this Lp reissues virtuoso banjo solos from the 1920's, generally in the complex, multistrain, "novelty" rag style then in vogue, generally of Reser's own compositions aimed at spotlighting his unparallelled technique, and generally with only one instrument, the piano, providing support. It goes without saying that such a program is going to offer little in the way of variety over forty-or-so minutes of listening, and though the album accomplishes

its purpose of directing attention to an amazingly skilled artist, no one who isn't a banjophile or novelty rag buff is likely to stick with it attentively all the way through - particularly as several of the selections are taken so fast that Reser has no opportunity to get below the surface of the tunes. Still, the mood is relentlessly and contagiously cheerful, and the original 78s were usually in surprisingly clean condition. Thus, no real fault to find here, but it obviously isn't for everyone.

* * *

Biograph BLP-1015Q 'Thomas "Fats" Waller, Volume 3', player piano "solos".

Selections: I'm Crazy 'Bout My Baby; Concentratin' On You; Ain't-cha' Glad?; My Heart's At Ease; Aligator Crawl; I'm More Than Satisfied; Blue, Turning Grey Over You; Low Down Papa; Ain't Misbehavin'; Rollin' Down The River; I've Got A Feeling I'm Falling; My Fate Is In Your Hands; Senorita Mine; Honey Hush; The Jitterbug Waltz; Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now.

Biograph BLP-1016Q 'James Scott, Volume 1', player piano "solos".

Selections: Frog Legs Rag, Ophelia Rag, Honey Moon Rag, Peace And Plenty Rag, Grace And Beauty, Great Scott Rag, Hilarity, Quality, Ragtime Oriole, Sunburst Rag, Efficiency Rag, Rag Sentimental, Evergreen Rag, Kansas City Rag, Climax Rag.

Two well-recorded Lps of piano rolls, compiled by expert Mike Montgomery whose careful attention to detail provides you with the most complete possible package, including liner notes, photos, rollo-graphical data, etc. Fats composed all of the tunes on 1015Q except "Low Down Papa" (a Spencer Williams number rendered in an approximation of the Waller style), injecting his characteristic lift and good cheer so thoroughly into the numbers that both qualities shine through even when he's not at the keyboard (Waller is the pianist only once - "I'm Crazy 'Bout My Baby"). Many of Scott's works appeared prior to the mass production of hand-played rolls; thus one must be prepared for the relatively less dynamic and more mechanical atmosphere of 1016Q (only "Honey Moon Rag", performed by Ernest L. Stevens, is hand-cut); nevertheless, his dramatic, orchestral conception is most compatible with the ebullient piano roll sound. Containing many seldom-recorded but excellent titles, and permeated with the optimism and nostalgic appeal of piano roll music, both Lps have special attraction to ragophiles; the Waller set of pop tunes is easier listening, and maybe more refreshing - the Scott is 100% first-class rags. You won't be dissatisfied with either.

* * *

Project 3 PR5080 "Ragtime, Stomps & Stride."

Selections: Keep Off The Grass, Valentine Stomp, Charleston Rag, Kansas City Stomp, I'm Just Wild About Harry, The Entertainer, Stop Time Rag, Fingerbuster, Viper's Drag, Birmingham Breakdown, The Pearls, Harlem Strut.

Personnel: Dick Hyman, piano; accompanied (on all tracks except "Harlem Strut") by Tony Mottola, banjo; Don Butterfield, tuba; and Panama Francis, drums.

Available from: Project 3, 1270 Avenue Of The Americas, New York City, New York 10020.

Hyman takes on some of the most difficult cutting contest tunes in the Harlem stride repertoire and comes up with a masterful album that is as enjoyable as it is impressive. His supporting rhythm section is deftly integrated into the dazzling pianistics, the arrangements enhancing their momentum and heightening their outgoing, unbeat mood; in fact, the little combo functions virtually as one man. Hyman himself, displaying crystalline execution and a light, forceful left hand, is nothing short of amazing on the up-up-up tempo items, relaxing a bit to dig in on the earthier Morton compositions or the more reserved Joplins. Put together with imagination, skill and respect for the material, this outstanding Lp virtually compels the listener's attention and enthusiasm. Don't miss it.

* * *

Turnabout TV-S 34579 "Americana, Volume IV: The Age Of Ragtime", piano solos by Roger Shields.

Selections: Harlem Rag, Possum And Taters, Bohemia, The Entertainer, Maple Leaf Rag, Reflection Rag, Pastime Rag #4, Ragtime Oriole, Cataract Rag, Rialto Ripples, Pork And Beans, Castle House Rag, Troublesome Ivories.

Available from: Vox Productions, Inc., 211 E. 43rd Street, New York City, New York 10017.

Breathes there a man with soul so dead as not to enjoy the Hyman disc reviewed above? If so, he might prefer Shields' generally over-classicized and spineless interpretations. Shields certainly knows his way around the keyboard, but he just can't let himself go; from hearing "Possum And Taters", for example, you'd think Hunter, whose rags are nothing if not boisterous and abandoned, composed only Maypole dances. The inherently more dramatic works fare somewhat better ("Cataract" is really excellent, the only bulls'-eye here), but even these suffer from Shields' annoying habit of accelerating and retarding during the strains. Dullsville.

* * *

Vanguard VSD 69/70 (2-Lp set): "The New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra"

Selections: African Pas'; Pineapple Rag; Pretty Baby*; Cleopatra Rag; After You've Gone; That Teasin' Rag; Pekin Rag; Ballin' The Jack*; Sunburst Rag; Oh, You Beautiful Doll*; Fig Leaf Rag; Reindeer Rag; Grace And Beauty; Mama's Gone, Goodbye; Shim-Me-Sha-Wobble; Kiss Me Sweet*; Kinklets; Bugle Boy March; Someday Sweetheart*; Original Rags; Sister Kate*; Rose Leaf Rag; Trombonium.

Personnel: Lionel Ferbos, trumpet/*vocals; Orange Kellin, clarinet; Paul Crawford, trombone; William Russell, violin; Lars Ivar Edegran, piano; Walter Payton, Jr., bass; John Robichaux, drums.

Fully realizing the potential hinted at by the steady improvement shown in its previous recordings, the New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra triumphantly takes us back to the sounds of the pre-jazz-age dance combos with a light-stepping, understated program of rags, ballads and other period stuff that is sheer delight from first to last. The arrangements (leader Edegran has so thoroughly grasped the idiom that his own charts stand on an equal footing with those from the ragtime era) are deceptive in their simplicity, because, though the melody is constantly to the fore, interest is maintained through ever-changing tonal colours - violin-clarinet unison, or one with a gentle counterpoint to the other; muted trumpet backed by relaxed piano fills; mood changes introduced by switching from bowed to plucked bass; extra brass backgrounds on repeats, etc. Very little here is improvised (in fact the insertion of a jazz piano solo into "Bugle Boy"'s strutting march tempo is the only jarring and unsatis-

factory thing in the set), but the joyous spirit that shines through each take (not a single weak one among the 23) is anything but formal. Tempos brisk and danceable, careful use of dynamics (dig the subdued close of "Fig Leaf"), renditions that build logically to the ride-outs - it's a gem all around, a complete success. Not for those who want only red-hot, free-wheeling bands, but the rest of you will be captivated.

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THE ROOTS OF CLASSICAL RAGTIME

(Ed. Comment: "American Folk Ragtime" is a beginning component of classical ragtime and yet folk ragtime is a blend of other musical ideas which came before. Classical Ragtime predominately contains African, American and European influences which, in their sum effect, has created a respectability in the musical stature of Ragtime. Society member FRED KERN of Chicago is on the Northwestern University faculty. He teaches piano and lectures on the subject of ragtime. Fred sent us a copy of the following article which also appeared in the April, 1976 issue of the highly regarded CLAVIER Magazine, 1418 Lake St., Evanston, Illinois 60202, U.S.A. Fred's excellent article was headed "RAGTIME WINS RESPECTABILITY". We are pleased to repeat the article for our own members):

"Pop music and "serious" music have not always been the most cordial companions, seeming to hold each other at arms length while going their separate ways, each denying the influence of the other. Ragtime was the popular music in the late 1890's and the following twenty years, but it had no standing among musicians of status.

At the turn of the century a "legitimate" musician named Artie Matthews, was so perplexed at his uncontrollable interest in ragtime that after composing a rag he would destroy it so as not to discredit himself as a member of the accepted musical community. Only five of his compositions, the series of "Pastime Rags," were rescued from this guilt-inspired destruction. They are quite unique and show a real inventive spirit within the syncopated underworld of "hateful ragtime." The American Federation of Musicians once had such contempt for popular music that it ruled ragtime off limits to its members.

Ragtime was a fusion of many components: African, white American, and European musical elements were allowed to coexist. This music popularized the native dance forms to the point where the cake walk, two-step, and slow-drag were often considered America's counterpart to the minuets, mazurkas, and waltzes of Mozart, Chopin, and Brahms. As musical influences began to flow more freely across the imaginary boundaries of classification to include pop, rock, folk, and Eastern influences, ragtime spread from the back streets of America to the courts of Europe, making its influence felt both at home and abroad in the music of such composers as Ives, Stravinsky, and Debussy. In 1900 the famous band of John Philip Sousa played ragtime at the Paris Exposition and started all Parisian society cake walking.

This weird and intoxicating music achieved its effect largely from a syncopated treble melody moving in opposition to a harmonic and unsyncopated bass line in duple meter and major tonality. The aural sensation is one impossible to describe until actually experienced. Once this has happened, the pleasures of ragtime are difficult to ignore,

and this music which almost demands movement of the listener can begin to be appreciated as a predecessor of jazz and an original American contribution to the musical world. In this year when we are endeavouring to stir pride in everything American it seems especially appropriate to examine the influence of native ragtime on the composers and compositions we now consider standard in the classical arena.

Although the dates of Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869) predate the ragtime era there are several considerations which warrant his inclusion here. He was one of the most flamboyant figures in nineteenth century American music and the first American to rank with the greatest European virtuosos of his time. His compositions have a distinctive American flavor due to his use of Afro-American and Creole sources and the highly syncopated rhythms so common to the later ragtime. The piano and the banjo both figured strongly in ragtime's development, and it is Gottschalk's composition "The Banjo" which captures much of the mood and spirit of that era.

In 1944 Samuel Barber wrote a set of four piano pieces called 'Excursions'. Of this set he says, "These are 'Excursions' in small classical forms into regional American idioms. Their rhythmic characteristics, as well as their source in folk material and their scoring, reminiscent of local instruments, are easily recognized." The fourth of the set is especially appropriate to this discussion since it brings to mind the banjo and the rhythms and liveliness inherent in its music. The use of syncopation adds zest to this American character piece.

As a young man of thirty-eight Claude Debussy stood on the midway of the Paris Exposition of 1900 and heard rag for the first time. The Sousa band played this important introduction, which was later to influence Debussy's writing. The familiar "Golliwog's Cake Walk," from 'Children's Corner Suite' (1908), incorporates the stride bass and the syncopated treble so basic to ragtime. From the first note of the introduction Debussy captures the syncopated lilt of the rag. Compare it with the introduction to Joplin's cake walk "Swipesy."

Debussy was also inspired by another vehicle of ragtime, the minstrel show, as seen in his Prelude from Book 1, "Minstrels." The music indicates to play with humor and in places, like a tambourine. "General Lavine-eccentric" is the counterpart in Book II of the Preludes where the performer is directed to play "in the style and the movement of a Cake-Walk." The music itself calls for the exaggerated sounds so characteristic of that dance movement and then shifts briefly to a theme reminiscent of a vaudeville song.

Debussy was formerly considered the first legitimate composer to embrace ragtime. However, from 1902-1904 when Charles Ives was at Yale, he composed a ragtime dance and thirteen ragtime pieces for theater orchestra. One of these, "In The Inn," was published separately and later used as a section of the second movement of the First Sonata. Ives was fond of quoting folk tunes, marches, hymns, and other well known pieces of the day. Among those found in "In The Inn" are "How Dry I Am," "Bringing in the Sheaves," and "I Hear They Welcome Voice." This movement is a ragtime scherzo which is instantly rhythmic and contains many surprising syncopations and inflections, but at the same time it can be tender and lyrical.

The fourth movement of Ives' First Sonata is also labeled a ragtime scherzo and is one of the composer's wildest conceptions. It is full of aggressive dissonances, cross rhythms, and tone clusters, which are combined with mounting syncopations and rhythmic drive. Ives has been called the first American composer of the twentieth century, and his position in American music, as well as twentieth century music in general, continues to rise.

Aaron Copland wrote "Four Piano Blues" with each movement concerned with one or two features that parallel ragtime. Many of the same syncopations were used at different tempos. The first of the set is a "blue note" study in pastoral style while the second is more syncopated and uses a ragtime texture in the second theme. Number four is the closest to rag in its spirit and syncopations. Although all four movements were written over a span of twenty-two years (1926-1948), this last movement was the first one composed and closest to the actual rag period.

Igor Stravinsky was much interested in dance rhythms, including ragtime. He was twenty-six when he first wrote rag-related pieces. "Ragtime" (1918), or "Ragtime for Eleven Instruments," was intended to give the new dance style "the importance of a concert piece, as in the past composers had done for the minuet, waltz, mazurka, and so on." This composition was transcribed for piano solo by the composer as was the rag "Valse" (1918) from 'L'Histoire du Soldat,' and the "Circus Polka," commissioned by Ringling Bros. Circus.

The "Piano Rag Music" (1919) originally written for piano solo, is a short, percussive, and rhythmic piece in the rag-jazz idiom requiring considerable pianistic ability.

The popularity of ragtime is also seen in Satie's "Ragtime du Paquebot," from 'Parade' (1917), transcribed for piano; Milhaud's "Trois Rag Caprices" (1922); Virgil Thompson's "Ragtime Bass," from 'Ten Etudes' (1943-44); Hindemith's "Shimmy" and "Ragtime" from 'Suite 1922'; and the George Gershwin-Will Donaldson collaboration, "Rialto Ripples" (1917).

The infectious spirit of ragtime continues to inspire composers of the present day. The fifth movement of George Rochberg's 'Carnival Music, Suite for Piano' (1975), is entitled "Toccata-Rag." Two composers on the faculty of the University of Michigan are writing and recording modern rags, suites, and novelty pieces incorporating modern harmonies, rhythms, and sometimes extreme technical demands.

One of the composers is William Albright, who has written chamber and symphonic works, as well as pieces for piano, organ, and tape. Among the piano works is a full scale, three movement, 'Grand Sonata in Rag,' and 'Three Novelty Rags.' The third of these novelty rags, "Brass Knuckles," was written with his colleague, William Bolcom.

Bolcom, too, has written in the contemporary idiom for a variety of chamber and instrumental media. Among his rag compositions are "Graceful Ghost," "Seabiscuits," "Raggin' Rudi," and a four movement suite called 'The Garden of Eden.'

One of the most interesting concepts in rag-related and influenced literature is that used by Phillip Ramey in "Leningrad Rag" (1972), subtitled "Mutations on Scott Joplin." The composition takes inspiration from Joplin's "Gladiolus Rag", and keeps the formal scheme the same, A B A C D. Within the A section the opening theme is rhythmically similar to Joplin's, but the Ramey theme is serially oriented and the harmonies are quite dissonant. The bass retains the stride pattern. Section C uses a similar arrangement. In sections B and D the right hand is left much the same as Joplin's "Gladiolus," but the harmonies in the left are changed. Actually, sections B and D are Joplin influenced by Ramey, and A and C are Ramey influenced by Joplin. There are polytonal chords and modulations, tone clusters and octave-displacements, off-beat accents, and cascades of left hand octaves. The result is a unique and fascinating potpourri of old-fashioned and contemporary mannerisms combined into a rag-related display piece for the modern performer.

What a wide variety of composers, concepts, and compositions came under ragtime's spell! This music of movement, lilt, and melody continues to intrigue those who play and hear it. Its basically optimistic character maintains a rollicking sense of humor, and at the same time it is tempered with a serious side, sometimes sentimental, melancholy, and introspective.

As the threat of jazz grew up to and into the early 1920's, Tin Pan Alley proceeded to glut the market with pieces of inferior quality, rag in name only. This seemed to signal the end of ragtime's original era. This captivating music was to lie dormant to all but a few in the ragtime underworld until the revival of the past several years.

Now, at last, we are beginning to appreciate the legacy of composers such as Scott Joplin, James Scott, Joseph Lamb, and scores of lesser knowns without whom the entire history of popular music would have been different, not to mention the music of many composers of "serious" music who found ragtime and its influence irresistible.

The acceptance of ragtime has in no way been universal, however. The philosophy of many who feel strongly about its merits, including many of the composers mentioned above, can possibly best be summarized in the words of the "King of Ragtime," Scott Joplin, and his remarks which preface his 'School of Ragtime' (1908):

What is scurrilously called ragtime is an invention that is here to stay. That is now conceded by all classes of musicians. That all publications masquerading under the name of ragtime are not the genuine article will be better known when these exercises are studied. That real ragtime of the higher class is rather difficult to play is a painful truth which most pianists have discovered. Syncopations are no indication of light or trashy music, and to shy bricks at "hateful ragtime" no longer passes for musical culture."

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RAGTIME CAN SERVE YOU WELL

- as Joy can be your protective rampart against carking care, so can RAGTIME be your musical rampart against dreary fare.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RAGTIME CONCERT

(Ed. Comment: Thoughts on the selection of a representative group of ragtime selections and appropriate comments for oral presentation and for program notes are not often put forward for sharing purposes and for the exchange of suggestions. Society member, CHARLES B. DAVIS, Jr., a musical director, and teacher of classical piano puts his formal activities aside from time to time and becomes "The Tarheel Ticker" of North Carolina. He has been polishing up a ragtime program on which he would welcome suggestions from other members. His address is 444 Rocky Run Road, Midway Park, North Carolina, 28544, U.S.A. (If in the vicinity of Jacksonville, Highway 17, ragtimers can phone 919-353-2872 for a welcome response). Charles uses the following:

"Ragtime In The Traditional Manner

CLASSIC RAGTIME	
Gladiolus Rag (1907-c. Belwin-Mills, 1971)	Scott Joplin (1868-1917)
Pineapple Rag (1908-c. Belwin-Mills, 1971)	
Honeymoon Rag (1916-c. E. H. Morris, 1950)	James Scott (1886-1938)
The Ragtime Oriole (1911- E. H. Morris, 1950)	
Patricia Rag (1916-c. E. H. Morris, 1950)	Joseph Lamb (1887-1960)
American Beauty Rag (1913-c. E. H. Morris, 1950)	
TIN PAN ALLEY	
Tickle the Ivories (1913, Jerome H. Remick)	Wallie Herzer
Dill Pickles (1906-c. Remick & Mills)	Charles L. Johnson (1876-1950)
NEW ORLEANS	
Perfect Rag (1923-c. FJM Estate, 1949)	Jelly Roll Morton (1885-1941)
EAST COAST (STRIDE)	
Charleston Rag (1899-c. Belwin-Mills, 1976)	J. Hubert Blake (1883-)
Alligator Crawl (1926-c. E. H. Morris, 1935)	Thomas "Fats" Waller (1904-1943)
NOVELTY	
Jay Walk (1927-c. Mills Music)	Edward "Zez" Confrey (1895-1971)
Pianoflage (1922-c. Sam Fox Pub. Co.)	Roy Bargy (1894-1974)

Ragtime as a word has two meanings: as the verb "to Rag" it means to syncopate a melody or make it feel out of time. As a noun, "ragtime" is a form of four strains that works much the way a medley does only that the pattern is AABBACCDD. The better rags have a feeling of continuity from one strain to the next. With some of the above written rags you will hear the medley idea, with others there will be an organic unity.

Scott Joplin is considered the "King of Ragtime Composers." Born near Marshall, Texas, he received his first musical training from a German music teacher in Texarkana, who noted the boy's ability. As a youth, he left home and worked as an itinerant pianist throughout the southwest.

In 1898, he settled down in Sedalia, Missouri where he played at the Maple Leaf

Club. Here he met the music publisher John Stark, who published his "Maple Leaf Rag" in 1899. This became the first million seller of sheet music and made both men get a new lease on life. In fact Stark coined the term "Classic Ragtime" to differentiate it from other ragtime and all of the above pieces under that title were originally published by him.

Joplin moved toward higher musical achievements as a writer of ragtime and also composed two operas as well as songs. His great objective was to receive recognition in his own day but that was not to be realized until the recent revival of interest in his music. He died a pauper in 1917 and only recently has his grave been given a marker.

James Scott was born in Neosha, Missouri, however he spent most of his adult life in Kansas City. His music is mostly built on short figures as opposed to the long line melodies of Joplin.

Joseph Lamb was one of the few white men who wrote classic rags and was not close to the places where the music originated. Raised in Montclair, New Jersey, he came under the spell of Joplin's music and turned to ragtime. His main output was published from 1908 to 1919. He began to write and revise some of his older music after the publication of "They All Played Ragtime" by Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis in 1950.

"Patricia" was named in honor of his daughter and "American Beauty" was named for the rose of the same name, which was popular during this time period as were flora and fauna within the American themes of the time. Joplin was partial to this idea as his titles witness.

"Honeymoon Rag" was said to be written during Scott's honeymoon for he could not keep away from the piano. The "Ragtime Oriole" is probably his most famous opus and it is one of my favourites.

Tin Pan Alley ragtime is noted for its use of catchy tunes which were typical of the great tin pan alley songs. The Herzer rag is not heard very often and nothing seems to be known about this gentleman.

"Dill Pickles" is one of the most famous tin pan alley type rags even though Charles L. Johnson spent most of his life in Kansas City.

Jelly Roll was important in the transformation of ragtime into jazz as he added elements of the blues and with his special flamboyance, he could prove nearly everything he bragged about himself and his music. This fine rag was recorded for the Gennett Record Company in 1923, however he probably composed it before this date.

East Coast or Stride ragtime developed during the same period of time as the classic and New Orleans styles during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Eubie Blake conceived the "Charleston Rag", named for a gambler, in 1899. He later went on to write a series of fine black musicals during the twenties and wrote such famous standards as "I'm Just Wild About Harry" and "Memories Of You".

"Fats" Waller was famous as a musical clown and for the way he lampooned many popular songs of the 1930s. However he was a fine musician who composed over 500 songs as well as writing some fine ragtime pieces in the "Stride" tradition. "Alligator Crawl" got its name from the six bar boogie figure that starts the piece.

Zez Confrey wanted to be a classical pianist; however after he was unable to go to Europe for further study he turned to popular music. His "Kitten on the Keys" of 1921 became the archtype of novelty ragtime. "Jay Walk" is a novelty rag of later vintage.

Roy Bargy, of Toledo, Ohio, played with the bands of Isham Jones and Paul Whiteman. He was highly regarded as one of the finest popular pianists of his time and this piece of his, "Pianoflage", is one of the finest and most difficult pieces in this genre.

Most of the music is still available in collections with the exception of "Perfect Rag." Most of it is available on recordings by the composer or another pianist with the exception of "Tickle."

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RAGTIME - GETTING TO KNOW YOU

(Ed. Comment: In drawing our attention to its "Questions" section by DOMINIC MILANO which we reprint below, we are also reminded that you should become aware of the variety of "Keyboard" subjects which could be of considerable interest to ragtime performers, and are contained in CONTEMPORARY KEYBOARD MAGAZINE, P. O. Box 907, Saratoga, California, 95070, U.S.A. The May/June 1976 issue Vol. 2, No. 3, dealt with the following question):

"I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT RAGTIME MUSIC. CAN YOU SUGGEST SOME BOOKS, RECORDS, ETC. ON THE SUBJECT?

Ragtime master and CK Advisory Board member Max Morath states, "The one overwhelmingly important book about classic ragtime is 'They All Played Ragtime,' by Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis (Oak Publications, 33 W. 60th St., New York, NY 10023). The book is not only a beautifully written running history of the early days of ragtime, but contains all the glossaries and lists of compositions you could possibly need." Mr. Morath goes on, "All research in the recent revival of ragtime has been based on this book." An excellent supplement to 'They All Played Ragtime' is 'The Art of Ragtime (Form and Meaning of an Original Black American Art)', by William J. Schafer and Johannes Riedal (Louisiana State University Press, Lakefront, New Orleans, LA 70122). This book approaches ragtime from a musicological point of view and contains some amount of biographical material. There are numerous collections of ragtime pieces available in sheet music form. Here is a list of some of the major ones supplied by Mr. Morath: 'The Collected Works of Scott Joplin' (Belwin-Mills, 25 Deshon Dr., Melville, NY 11746), a paperback edition of the celebrated New York Public Library hard-cover collected works containing all but three of the Scott Joplin compositions; 'Classic Piano Rags' and 'Ragtime Rarities' (Dover Books, 180 Varick St., New York,

NY 10014) contain rags by many other greats as well as certain Joplin works, edited by Rudi Blesh and Trebor Tichenor; 'Scott Joplin: The Missouri Rags,' and 'Mississippi Ragtime' (G. Schirmer, 866 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022), edited by Max Morath; 'Giants of Ragtime' and 'Sincerely, Eubie Blake' (Edward B. Marks Music, Distributed by Belwin-Mills); and soon to come from Marks Music, 'Ragtime Current,' edited by Rudi Blesh, will be a folio of rags by modern composers. Recordings that Mr. Morath recommends are: Joshua Rifkin, 'Piano Rags by Scott Joplin,' Vols. I through III (Nonesuch, Vols. I & II, 73026; Vol. III, 71305); William Bolcom, 'Heliotrope Bouquet' (Nonesuch, 71257); Gunther Schuller and The New England Conservatory Orchestra, 'The Red Back Book' (Angel, GC31031); Dick Hyman, 'Scott Joplin: The Complete Works for Piano' (RCA(5), CRL5-1106); Dick Zimmerman, 'Scott Joplin: His Complete Works' (Murray-Hill, 419 Park Ave., New York, NY 10016); Max Morath, 'The Best of Scott Joplin And Other Rag Classics' (Vanguard(2), VSD-39/40) and 'The World Of Scott Joplin,' Vols. I & II (Vanguard, 310). There are, of course, many other recordings of ragtime on various labels. Access to some of these records and also to news and scholarship in the ragtime field can be gained through two privately run societies: The Ragtime Society (Box 520, Weston, Ontario, Canada), and The Maple Leaf Club (5560 W. 62nd St., Los Angeles, CA 90056)."

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RAGTIME BOB DARCH
UPSTAGED BY A PIANO

Some years ago, the Whist Club of Nome, Alaska, did not laugh when ragtime piano player Bob Darch sat down to play. Instead, they breathed a collective sigh of dismay.

"I had been playing at Anchorage when I got this call from Nome. It was a lady from the Nome Whist Club. They wanted me to come up there to entertain at their annual dinner."

"I arrived in Nome the night before. The first thing I did was ask if I could get a look at the piano. The lady in charge said the piano was locked up, down at the whist hall, and the key was some other place and it would be a lot of trouble to get it. She told me not to worry about it, that everything would be all right."

"I didn't like the idea of playing a piano I had never seen, but I went along with it. The night of the dinner, they told me they wanted me to play background music during dinner and then do a little show after dinner. After that I was supposed to provide background music while they played whist."

"But when I sat down and pounded the keyboard, nothing happened. Silence. Seems that somebody had taken the action out of the piano to have it repaired."

"I said, 'Well, what do you want me to do now, whistle?' The lady in charge was pretty upset. She said, 'I suppose you want to get paid?' I said, 'Yup.' So they paid me and I went back to Anchorage."

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LETTERS

Letters are welcome from members. Excerpts believed to be of general interest are passed along in this section of THE RAGTIMER.

Thank you so much for the issue of the Ragtimer, with its happy memories of the best ever Bash! What a wonderful time I had!

I thought you'd like to know that I decided to have a "bash" myself at learning music and so bought a small used Wurlitzer organ (Super Sprite)! So far I'm still floundering about but have hopes! Ragtime is probably out of the question for a long time . . . but! So if it leads to anything, it will be because of being a member of the Society and being so struck with the music itself and the pleasure we all share through it!

John Matthew, Toronto, Canada

(Ed. Comment: Achievement comes from making a start and sticking with it. John's determination offers encouragement to others who must begin at the beginning.)

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In one of your recent issues of The Ragtimer, you graciously printed my letter regarding my Master's thesis on Joseph F. Lamb.

My work entitled "Joseph F. Lamb: A Ragtime Composer Recalled" is a biographical study of Lamb which utilizes the oral history technique. Interviews with Lamb's family, friends and business associates as well as Lamb's own correspondence have been used.

For those interested Lambophiles, it is available through Inter Library Loan at Brooklyn College at the following address:

Brooklyn College Library
Brooklyn College of the City University of New York
Bedford Avenue & Avenue H
Brooklyn, New York 11210
Attention: Ms. Lillian Lester

If any reader is interested in communicating with me, they may do so at my home address.

Marjorie Freilich Den,
485 First Avenue (Apt. 15C),
New York, New York 10016, U.S.A.

(Ed. Comment: In 1903, Axel W. Christensen of Chicago opened his Ragtime School offering the prospect of "RAGTIME TAUGHT IN TEN LESSONS." Starting with a small studio, his operations expanded into some thirty-five locations across the United States and flourished until the end of the ragtime era. We are reminded of those days in quoting from a letter received.)

It may be of interest to know that I studied ragtime at Christensen's Ragtime School in Chicago in 1917 and that I can still play.

Mrs. W. E. Timberlake,
Oroville, Cal., U.S.A.

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I write this letter because I feel all of you should know something about the award that Mr. Max Morath received last year for his talent and efforts in keeping Ragtime alive over the last 20 years.

The award is called the "Tajiri" Award that is presented by the Larry Tajiri Memorial Foundations. Larry Tajiri was the late Denver Post Drama Editor for the Denver Post, Denver, Colorado.

This said a lot for Max, because all of us know when you mention the name of Max Morath he is without a doubt Mr. "Ragtime" of this century. Max has done so much in the preservation of Ragtime that I could write all day and never be able to say enough about this man as a true Ragtime player and composer. A good example of this is the Rag he wrote in memory of Joseph Lamb for his widow Mrs. Amelia Lamb, which is titled "One for Amelia", or "Golden Hours" in memory of the late Harriet Janis, one of the authors of "They All Played Ragtime", which is a must for any Ragtimer to read.

Max has just come out with a new release on the Vanguard label "SRV-351-SD" called "The World of Scott Joplin" Volume #2. On this album he has written two Rags, one is called "Echoes of the Rosebud", and a Rag written for his lovely wife Norma; it is called, you guessed it, "One for Norma".

A tip of our Ragtime hats should go to Mr. Morath on receiving the "Tajiri Award" along with all the enjoyment he has passed along to millions of people over the last 20-25 years.

I believe in later years history will show that Max really has done more than his share in the preservation of Ragtime. He is truly a wonderful person and human being.

Verle Platt,
Aurora, Colorado, U.S.A.

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CAPSULE

INFORMATION

RELEASES ---------- FOR HAPPY HUNTING

NOTE: We often receive information from members and other sources which can be passed along in brief form as items of possible general interest. CAPSULE INFORMATION RELEASES do not refer to items or material which can be obtained from the SOCIETY. Further, we do not guarantee the accuracy of the information given. Under the conditions stated, we are able to publicize a broader coverage of promising information coming to our attention.

LP Record - HAPPY BIRTHDAY BIX, The Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Band In Washington - Fat Cat's Jazz, FCJ 160. Recorded live at Bix concerts 1974 and 1975 for PRJC - Tex Wyndham is the band pianist. Contains 9 tracks of fine old jazz standards. Available from Fat Cat's Jazz Records, P. O. Box 458, Manassas, Virginia 22110, U. S. A. (U. S. price $6. 98 postpaid).

LP Record - BELGIAN RAGTIME, Marc Heronet, Alain Lesire and Andre Van Lint - EMI-4C054. Contains 14 tracks of period to contemporary ragtime by three Belgian pianists - an unusual source for ragtime. Information can be obtained from Marc Heronet, 9 Av. Vandromme, 1160 Brussels, Belgium for ordering purposes.

Book - SCOTT JOPLIN AND THE RAGTIME ERA by PETER GAMMOND- 223 pages, hard cover, copyright 1975 with Foreword by EUBIE BLAKE. For information write to St. Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y. 10010, U. S. A. Includes 4 appendices on ragtime references covering Books, Music, LP Recordings and Checklist of Music by Scott Joplin. Gammond is an English author and lives in Middlesex, England. He has written many books on the subject of popular music.

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CEL-124	Troublesome Ivories	CEL-136	Polyragmic
CEL-125	Merry Widow Rag	CEL-137	Grace And Beauty
CEL-126	Memories Of You	CEL-138	The Entertainer
CEL-127	I'm Just Wild About Harry	CEL-139	Cottontail Rag

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SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - at the Chelsea Inn, 33 Gerrard St. W., Toronto - in "The Piano Bar" Mon. to Fri. 5:00 p. m. to 8:00 p. m. and with his trio in "The Chelsea Bun" Lounge Mon. to Sat. 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

EUBIE BLAKE - The DEAN of RAGTIME - This popular recording artist and composer performs frequently at Concerts and Festivals. Does guest appearances on T. V. talk shows and is often to be heard on radio programs (watch your local press music programs for dates).

STEEN CHRISTENSEN - at the Mechanical Music Museum (MMM), Vesterbrogade 150, Copenhagen (Denmark), every 2nd & 4th Wednesday each month.

BOB DURST - (RAJAH OF RAGTIME) plays ragtime piano on the Holiday Inn circuit thru the middle U. S.

PETER FAHRENHOLTZ - plays solo ragtime piano and with bands - regularly on tour and at Stenkaelderen, Aarhus, Denmark.

DAVE FLOWITT - at DJ's Tavern & Rest., Cor. University Ave. & College, Toronto. Solo piano Sat. 4:30 to 7:30 p. m. Watch for gigs with Dr. McJazz Band.

"GASLIGHT" GALE FOEHNER - at Rochester, N. Y. - Regularly performing ragtime and sing-a-longs with slides at concerts and private party engagements.

RALPH GRUGEL - and The Eagle Jazz Band at East Shore Club, Lakeshore Drive, Cleveland, Ohio, Fri. and Sat.

JOHN HASSE - at The Ordinary, Nashville, Indiana, Fri. and Sat. nights.

JIM HESSION - at the Polynesian Hotel (Tambu Lounge), Disney World, Orlando, Florida - six nights a week.

JIM KAPLAN - at the Pizza-Stein, 1428 W. Galena Ave., Freeport, Illinois on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

TOM LOUGH - at the Rusty Nail, Route 43, 2 miles north of Kent, Ohio, with banjoist Bill Moorhead, Thurs. and Fri. nights.

JOHN MADDOX - at El Porto Rest., 121 King St., Alexandria, Virginia, from June 7 to Sept. 11.

KEN MAYHERCY - (RAGTIME $ BILL) - at Signal Hill Supper Club, Craig., Col. for summer.

GLENN MEYER - and his band at St. Louis, Mo., making regular appearances.

BOB MILNE - at Clamdiggers Rest., 30555 Grand River, Farmington (Detroit), Mich. Mon. thru Sat. 7:30 to 12:00 p. m.

MIKE MONTGOMERY - at The Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, John R. Road north of McNichols, Detroit, Michigan, Friday nights.

MAX MORATH - on the road with his new show "The Ragtime Years".

DR. ELI NEWBERGER - and The New Black Eagle Jazz Band at the Stickey Wicket Pub, West Main Street, Hopkinton, Mass., Thursday 8:00 p. m. to 12:00 p. m. (Pianist is Bob Pilsbury).

TOM NOEL - on the road with his living portrayal shows "Mark Twain at Home", and "Mr. Jelly Lord" based on the life of Jelly Roll Morton.

CHARLIE RASCH - with SISTER KATE, at the Cow Palace, Bancroft Road about 8 miles west of Toledo, Ohio, Fridays and Saturdays 9:00 p. m. on.

HANK ROSS - with Red Onion Jazz Band, at O'Connor's Beef'n Ale House, 708 Mountain Blvd., Watchung, N. J. Friday nights at 7:30 p. m. on.

TOM SCHMUTZLER - and the Hardware City Temperance and Ragtime Society, at Shakey's Pizza Parlor, Vernon. Conn. - Fridays and Saturdays.
- at The One Way Fare, Simsburg, Conn. Sunday nights.

BOB SEELEY - at Clamdiggers Rest., 30555 Grand River, Farmington (Detroit), Mich. Mon. thru Fri. 4:00 to 7:00 p. m.

DAN SUMMERS - and New Charleston Chasers regularly appearing in the Buffalo area.

TREBOR TICHENOR - on The Goldenrod Showboat, at St. Louis, Missouri. Does weekly radio show on KWMU - FM 90. 7 called "RAGOPHILE with Trebor Tichenor", Fridays at 6:00 p. m.

TERRY WALDO - has weekly half hour radio show "THIS IS RAGTIME" on National Public Radio - Check your local listing.

TEX WYNDHAM - and The Red Lion Jazz Band, appearing regularly at Mencotti's Restaurant, 1101 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, Delaware.

BILL ZINN - and Zinn's Ragtime String Quartet doing Concerts and College dates in the New York area.

PERFORMERS: Please keep us posted on your whereabouts and your schedule will appear in this column.

The Chrysanthemum

AN AFRO-INTERMEZZO

By

Scott Joplin.

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